

Message Text

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17

ACTION ITFE-05

INFO OCT-01 EA-06 ISO-00 SR-02 ORM-01 SS-15 INSE-00 IO-10

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R 220552Z JUN 75

FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6006

INFO AMCONSUL MELBOURNE

AMCONSUL SYDNEY

CINCPACREP GUAM

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE CANBERRA 4086

DEPT FOR IATF

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: AS, SREF

SUBJECT: TRAVEL OF AUSTRALIAN MEDICAL VOLUNTEERS TO GUAM TO
WORK WITH VIETNAMESE REFUGEES

1. AS DEPT AWARE, SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF AUSTRALIAN MEDICAL VOLUNTEERS, INCLUDING DOCTORS, NURSES, AND PUBLIC HEALTH WORKERS, HAS TRAVELLED TO GUAM IN PAST SIX WEEKS TO WORK WITH VIETNAMESE REFUGEES. VOLUNTEERS HAVE EXPECTED NO PAY AND HAVE BEEN MOTIVATED BY LAUDABLE DESIRE TO HELP VICTIMS OF RECENT EVENTS IN INDO-CHINA. MICHAEL DARBY, SYDNEY ORGANIZER OF GROUP SENDING MEDICAL VOLUNTEERS, INFORMED EMBASSY JUNE 20 THAT, TO DATE, SOME 20 VOLUNTEERS HAVE TRAVELLED FROM AUSTRALIA TO GUAM UNDER THIS PROGRAM. IT HAS SO FAR PROVED IMPOSSIBLE TO ARRANGE SOME MEANS TO COVER THEIR CONSIDERABLE TRANSPORTATION EXPENSES, EITHER THROUGH USAF FLIGHTS OR THROUGH DIRECT GRANT OF TRAVEL EXPENSES. DARBY ADVISES THAT ORIGINAL DONATION HE HAD BEEN ABLE TO ARRANGE FROM PRIVATE BENEFACTORS IN AUSTRALIA, AMOUNTING TO ABOUT \$US13,000, HAS VIRTUALLY BEEN EXHAUSTED IN AIR FARES AND IN TELEPHONE CALLS ASSOCIATED WITH ARRANGING FOR VOLUNTEERS.

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2. MEANWHILE, DARBY TELLS US THAT U.S. MILITARY MEDICAL PERSONNEL IN GUAM HAVE INDICATED THEY WOULD LIKE TO TURN OVER COMPLETE MEDICAL SERVICE AT QTE TOKYO END QTE CAMP AND TRAVELLING DOCTOR SERVICE IN GUAM TO AUSTRALIAN MEDICAL VOLUNTEERS. SINCE AUSTRALIAN VOLUNTEERS ARE SERVING U.S. PUBLIC PURPOSE, AT LITTLE COST TO U.S., SEEMS REASONABLE TO US THAT U.S. SHOULD ASSUME COST OF MOVING VOLUNTEERS TO AND FROM GUAM. WE UNDERSTAND FROM DARBY THAT DEPT HAS CONCLUDED THAT THESE CIVILIAN VOLUNTEERS CAN NOT RPT NOT BE TRANSPORTED BY USAF AIRCRAFT, SINCE THIS WOULD BE IN VIOLATION OF STANDING AIRLINE POLICY. WE CAN APPRECIATE CONSIDERATIONS OF POLICY WHICH MAY HAVE LED TO THIS REPORTED DECISION, BUT IT SEEMS TO US THAT U.S. CAN REASONABLY BE EXPECTED TO PROVIDE SOME FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO VOLUNTEERS TO ENSURE THEY DO NOT HAVE TO FUND TRANSPORTATION TO GUAM OUT OF THEIR OWN POCKET.

3. KEY QUESTION, OF COURSE, IS SOME IDEA OF HOW LONG THE MEDICAL VOLUNTEERS WILL BE NEEDED. WE UNDERSTAND CAMPS IN GUAM WILL RUN DOWN IN NUMBERS AS REFUGEES ARE MOVED TO U.S. HOWEVER, WE BELIEVE THAT, IF SUBSTANTIAL NUMBERS OF REFUGEES WILL REMAIN IN GUAM OVER NEXT SIX MONTHS OR SO, THERE WILL BE CONTINUING, USEFUL ROLE FOR AUSTRALIAN MEDICAL VOLUNTEERS TO PERFORM. DARBY HAS GIVEN US LIST OF 75 VOLUNTEERS WHO HAVE CONTACTED HIM WITH OFFER TO WORK IN GUAM. THERE IS CLEARLY CONSIDERABLE POOL OF MEDICAL SKILLS AVAILABLE IN AUSTRALIA FOR SERVICE TO REFUGEES. ADDITIONALLY, AN AUSTRALIAN COMPUTER SPECIALIST IS CURRENTLY IN GUAM, HELPING TO REORGANIZE COMPUTER REGISTER OF REFUGEES.

4. ACTION REQUESTED: THAT IATF EARMARK US\$15,000 TO EMBASSY TO FUND AIR TRANSPORTATION BY COMMERCIAL MEANS OF AUSTRALIAN VOLUNTEERS TRAVELLING TO AND FROM GUAM TO WORK WITH VIETNAMESE REFUGEES.
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